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ABSTRACT

Prepared as part of a project designed to provide an objectively measured indication of the quality of student writing in one school district, this paper examines argumentative and narrative essays written by students at the fifth, eighth, and twelfth grade levels. The first section of the paper discusses the primary analysis of student writing ability and includes descriptions of the student sample selection process, the writing assignment, the writing samples produced by the students, the mechanical errors made in the essays, and the syntactic complexity evidenced in the essays. The second section provides a rhetorical and cognitive analysis of the essays and discusses the overall rhetorical quality of the papers, the amplitude of the writing, the ability of the students to handle abstract topics, the nature of the arguments presented in the argumentative essays, the rhetorical control of argumentative structure exercised by students, and the nature of the revisions made by the students. The third section discusses the teaching implications of the study's findings, which revealed that the students were unable to structure argumentative prose or to revise their work adequately. Appendixes contain copies of student writing samples. (FL)

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THE CARLETON WRITING PROJECT, PART II

The Writing Abilities of a Representative Sample of

Grade 5, 8 and 12 Students

FINAL REPORT

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

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INTRODUCTION

In 1979, as the final stage of an experiment in the use of holistic scoring, the Carleton Board of Education commissioned an analysis of the papers written for that experiment. The papers in question were written by a group of 500 grade 7 and 8 students whose teachers had volunteered for the experiment, and each student had written two papers, one a narrative, the other an argument. The analysis demonstrated the extraordinarily high scores for the syntactic complexity of the work of the students in this selected sample, especially in the argumentative papers, and also the extremely low frequency of any mechanical errors, especially in the narrative papers.

Such results speak very well for the quality of the teaching of writing by the teachers whose students were involved. However, precisely because of the nature of the sample, they do not reveal the quality of student writing throughout the Board. Nor do they investigate the relationship between student performance and the Core Curriculum for Language Arts.

The present study, which was commissioned by the Board as part of its evaluation of the Core Curriculum, addresses both these crucial questions. In effect, it extends the range of the earlier study in two ways. In the first place, it examines the quality of student writing not at two adjacent grade levels, but at three different levels, grades 5, 8 and 12, and does so not on the basis of a selected sample but on the basis of a 10% random sample which allows for principled extrapolation to

the 7,720 students in those grades. Secondly, on the basis of a 10% random subsample of the original papers, it offers a much more detailed analysis of the cognitive, rhetorical and syntactic performance of the students at these levels. Together, these extensions make possible a comprehensive evaluation of the "Writing" component in the Core Curriculum, and as well a discussion of the pedagogical implications of the whole study.

Chapter I. The Primary Analysis

The Sample

The primary analysis of student writing ability was undertaken on the writing of a 10% sample of all students at the Grade 5, 8 and 12 levels. For each grade level, the sample was drawn on the basis of a table of random numbers from the master lists of student rolls by school and grade provided by the Board. A master list of the students in the sample, identified by school, class and position in the class roll, was prepared for distribution by the Board to the students' teachers. In addition to a covering letter from the Board, the material sent to the teachers contained the following instruction:

> Selection of Students: For the Grade 5 and 8 levels, the sample has been drawn on an arithmetic basis. If you teach at this level, you will have to identify the papers that are to be sent in to the Board. If, in your class roll, boys precede girls, then assign consecutive numbers to all the students, starting with 1 for the first boy. If, in your roll, girls precede boys, then please make up a complete class list in which boys precede girls, and then assign consecutive numbers to all students, starting with 1 for the first boy. The students whose papers are to be sent in, and for whom data sheets are to be completed, are identified by number on the master list, of which the Vice-Principal has a copy.
>
> For the Grade 12 level, the sample has been drawn direclty from the computer lists by class. The students whose papers are to be sent in and for whom data sheets are to be collected are identified by name on the master list.
>
> Exception: If any of the students selected is absent, or has left, or is an E.S.L. student whose command of English is fundamentally different from a native speaker's command, then you must substitute the paper of the student whose name immediately follows, and complete a data sheet for that student rather than the student originally designated. But no other substitutions are to be made, nor are substitutions to be made for any other reason.

The exclusion of E.S.L. students was necessary since the measures used in the analysis of the primary sample presuppose native competence in English. The replacement procedure merely ensured a satisfactory response rate without jeopardising the principle of random selection.

The sample was stratified by sex, grade level, in the case of Grade 12 by general versus advanced, and in all cases by the teachers' indication of the overall ability level of the student, rated on a four-point scale. (As it happened, the details of the rating scale were so often misinterpreted by teachers that their ratings could not be taken into account). Other potentially relevant information, such as some indication of socio-economic status and information as to whether or not the students were in French Immersion programs could not be sought because of the Board's exceptionally stringent right-to-privacy regulations.

The actual response rate dropped from 96.72% at the Grade 5 level to 88.57% at the Grade 12 level, as noted in the following table:

	Target Population	Responses Received	Percentage
Grade 5	244	236	96.72
Grade 8	248	226	91.13
Grade 12	280	248	88.57

Since the instructions relating to the writing assignment were deliberately distributed and collected by Board officers in such a way that it would be impossible to determine anything about any individual student in the sample beyond what was given on the Data Sheets, there is no way to determine why the response rate was less than 100% (perhaps some students had left; perhaps some students, teachers or administrators refused to cooperate). Equally it was impossible to follow up the non-responses.

The Task and its Administration

The writing assignment was an argumentative piece of writing for the Grade 8 and 12 students, and dealt with the same topic, namely violence on television. At the insistence of the officers of the Program Department, however, the topic assigned to the Grade 5 students was a narrative assignment. Since the Core Curriculum quite properly does not encourage the writing of argumentative assignments before the intermediate (7-10) level, such an assignment could not in fairness have been used in a study trying to discern and describe student achievement in writing at that level. The narrative assignment which was given did provide students with an occasion to demonstrate their abilities. Unfortunately, however, the change of mode from narrative at Grade 5 to argumentative at Grade 8 introduces a skewing factor which causes some apparent distortion in the results. In some respects, a narrative assignment at Grade 5 is easier than an argumentative assignment at Grade 8. Consequently

errors and other mechanical and basic problems which can be attributed to the relative difficulty of the assignment are likely to prove more frequent at the Grade 8 level than at the Grade 5 level. On the other hand, argumentation at any level requires a level of syntactic complexity far beyond what is to be expected in narrative; consequently in the syntactic complexity scores the design created a much greater distance between the Grade 5 and the Grade 8 results than would have been the case if students in both age groups had been assigned topics in the same mode.

The actual wording of the assignment was as follows:

> Grade 5: Tell a story (or make up a story) about an event that almost changed your life. (For example, it could be a storm, or a fight, or a T.V. program, or anything else you might imagine.
>
> Grade 8: Violence on television is a topic of some concern today. Do you consider the effects of this violence harmful or not? Give evidence for your arguments.
>
> Grade 12: Violence on television is a controversial topic with arguments on both sides. Give the basic position of each side before developing your own opinion.

In the detailed instructions given to teachers, they were told that the assignment and completion of the essay was to be spread over three days. On the first day, the topic was to be announced, and the students told that they would have class time the following day to work on the essay. This instruction provided students with a preliminary stimulus to allow them to think about the topic in advance. (Group preparation orchestrated by the teachers, however, was proscribed). After the first day

of writing in class (for one whole period), the instruction provided for the drafts to be collected and then redistributed the following day for the writing of a final version. The assignment thus gave the students an opportunity to revise extensively, if they wished to do so. In this way, care was taken that the assignment be a fair one, giving students ample opportunity to draw on relevant skills, and avoiding the artificial atmosphere of a one-hour exam which, whatever its other merits might be, can never provide a good basis for determining what writing skills would be outside of the examination context.

The assignments and instructions were distributed from the Board office in the second half of November, 1979. The writing samples started to come in almost immediately, but it was not until early in January, 1980, that the set of Grade 12 responses was as complete as it was to be.

General Description of the Sample

Table 1, on the following page, provides a summary description of the length of the essays in the sample by grade. The measures reported in the Table are three: an absolute count of words (and this was an actual count, not an estimate); an absolute count of sentences (again an actual count; for this purpose, run-ons, comma splices and fragments were treated as though they had been correctly punctuated); and a count of T-Units. (This measure will be discussed further in the next section).

CARLETON BOARD OF EDUCATION: WRITING SKILLS AT LEVELS 5, 8, AND 12

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION BY GRADE

		GRADE 5 N = 236	GRADE 8 N = 226	GRADE 12 N = 248
WORDS:	MEAN	217.9	210.5	404.7
	MIN	43	36	133
	MAX	803	652	1466
SENTENCES:	MEAN	20.2	12.4	22.5
	MIN	1	2	7
	MAX	73	39	77
T-UNITS:	MEAN	24.8	14.8	25.6
	MIN	5.0	3.0	6
	MAX	90	49	92

Table 1: Summary Description by Grade

The Table demonstrates at a glance the effect of the difference in mode on the amount of writing produced. In the word-count, the mean, maximum and minimum at the Grade 5 level are all higher than the corresponding scores at the 8th grade level. So are two of the three scores relating to the sentence count, and all the scores relating to the raw count of T-Units. This does not mean, obviously, that the Grade 8 writers are intrinsically less fluent than the Grade 5 writers; rather it means that the Grade 5 writers were able to write much more fluently in response to their narrative assignment than the Grade 8 writers could in response to their argumentative assignment.

The differences between the Grade 8 and the Grade 12 writers, however, are just as striking, and in this case point to a real developmental difference. By every measure, the Grade 12 students wrote far more; in most cases, in fact, the Grade 12 scores are close to 100% greater than the Grade 8 scores. The more detailed analysis within examines the nature and significance of these changes.

Basic Mechanical Skills

All the papers in the sample were subjected to a rigorous count of mechanical errors. The actual list of errors to be scored was drawn up after a preliminary reading of the papers in the sample. The types of errors noted ranged from the most absolute, such as fundamental mistakes in spelling and

and punctuation in cases where there is never any doubt as to what the correct form is, to various marginal categories in which certain choices in matters of good usage, for example, are sometimes regarded as errors even though they occur in edited professional writing which, in every other respect, would have to be regarded as exemplifying standard English. In short, we wanted to make a note of everything that the most demanding teacher or employer might regard as a mechanical error.

The total number of errors or error-types allowed for on the analytic instrument was fifty, for all of which every instance was noted. They consisted first of all of eleven specific punctuation errors that occurred in at least some of the papers, with a twelfth category for "other punctuation errors." These ranged from indubitable errors, such as the abuse of apostrophes, to features which occur in edited professional writing, such as sentence fragments. A second section of the analytic instrument provided for a count of seven types of spelling mistakes, ranging from the confusion of homophones (such as to, too and two) to apparent non-standard usages which, in this group of students, are probably phonetic in origin, such as the occasional omissions of -ed and -s suffixes. The third section allowed for a count of precisely defined errors in pronoun case (again ranging from clearly substandard to standard) and in pronoun use (for example, in shifts from second to third person in cases of indefinite reference). The remainder of the analytic instrument allowed for a number of other types of mechanical errors: errors

in adverbial usage, modification errors, errors in parallel structure, in agreement, verb forms, and predication.

When the initial count had been checked, the raw counts were entered into the computer on an SPSS system file, and a simple frequency count was made as the first stage of the analysis. Our study of this frequency run showed that, in many cases, the incidence of particular errors in the complete set of papers was so low that further analysis of them individually would have been supererogatory: the two or three incidences of a particular error which had led to its inclusion on the analytic instrument proved to be the only incidences in the complete set. Consequently certain classes of related errors were grouped together to create a new compounded variable: for example, all the punctuation errors with a very low raw frequency were added to the "other punctuation errors" variable to create a new variable, "punctuation errors." These new variables were then computed as percentages of various constants in order to allow for direct comparison, the choice of the constant being determined by the nature of the error. For example, the raw incidences of such errors as run-on sentences, comma splices, sentence fragments, omission of question marks, and also the new variable "punctuation errors" were expressed as a percentage of the total number of sentences in each paper; but the raw incidences of each category of spelling error were expressed as a percentage of the total number of words in each paper.

Table 2, on the following page, shows the percentage of

ERROR:	GRADE 5	GRADE 8	GRADE 12
A. PUNCTUATION			
RUN-ON SENTENCES	36.4	75.7	87.5
COMMA SPLICE	56.4	73.	72.6
FRAGMENT	68.3	66.4	68.1
OMITTED QUESTION MARK	83.3	88.5	83.9
OMITTED APOSTROPHE FOR POSSESSION	81.8	82.7	72.2
OMITTED APOSTROPHE FOR CONTRACTION	86.	84.1	87.9
CONFUSION OF ITS AND IT'S	95.8	88.9	92.3
OMITTED QUOTATION MARKS	70.3	95.1	98.
ALL OTHER PUNCTUATION ERRORS	12.7	13.7	12.5
B. SPELLING ERRORS			
CONFUSION OF HOMOPHONES	54.2	61.9	72.6
PHONETIC ERRORS	69.1	85.4	91.5
WORD DIVISION ERRORS	64.4	71.2	75.
ALL OTHER SPELLING ERRORS	22.9	35.4	45.2
ALL SPELLING ERRORS	3.8	4.4	4.4
C. PRONOUN ERRORS			
PRONOUN CASE ERRORS	94.5	98.2	98.4
INDEFINITE SINGULAR THEY	99.2	83.2	81.9
ALL ERRORS IN USE OF PRONOUNS	67.4	23.9	29.
D. OTHER ERRORS			
VAGUE REFERENCE	80.5	44.7	53.2
UNCLEAR REFERENCE	86.4	71.2	64.1
SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT	92.8	87.2	77.4
SUBSTANDARD VERB FORMS	91.5	95.1	96.
MODIFICATION ERRORS	95.8	90.3	88.7

Table 2: Percentage of Error-free Papers (by Grade)

papers which contained no instances of the errors or types of errors listed. This Table brings out a number of important points. The first is that there are scarcely any papers that do not have at least one incident of some mechanical error. In part, this fact is due to the deliberately extreme definition of error adopted for the purposes of this study: as has already been suggested, a number of practices have been counted as errors even though the authority for them in professional adult writing and in handbooks of usage may be quite strong. This accounts, for example, for the relatively small number of papers showing no incidence of "all other punctuation errors." This is not the case, however, with spelling errors (American spellings, where British and American preferences differ, were not counted as spelling errors.) So far as spelling errors are concerned, it needs to be borne in mind that almost all adults occasionally misspell particular words; that they do not always notice these errors when they reread or revise what they have written; and that many such errors are unnoticed by other readers as well. One of the co-authors of this report habitually misspells know and their in his handwritten drafts, and his exceptionally competent secretary nearly always shortens too. A reading of the minutes of the Board Program and Evaluation Committee meeting preceding the one at which these results were first presented will reveal a number of spelling mistakes. A reading of a proof copy of a book co-edited by the authors of this report happened to catch, after as many as six independent

readings by others, such spelling mistakes as Piglet for Piaget and (less amusingly but even more egregiously) reserch for research (in a sub-heading).

In short, while it is easy to feel supercilious about the spelling mistakes one happens to notice, a certain incidence of spelling error is tolerated in professional adult writing. It has to be. There is nothing in the relatively low frequency of papers free of spelling errors that can be taken to contradict the results of study of the performance of Carleton Board students at grades 4 and 7 which revealed system-wide means far higher than national norms for individual schools.

Apart from this, Table 2 reveals again how striking the effect of the different modes is in the incidence of particular types of error. The effects are most noticeable in the frequency of the kinds of error that are intrinsically likely in argumentative writing, such as errors in pronoun use, and those that are conditioned by the greater cognitive and rhetorical complexity of the argumentation assignment, such as errors in reference. For example, the incidence of papers free of examples of vague reference drops from 80.5% at the grade 5 level to 44.7% at the grade 8 level, and recovers only slightly, to 53.2%, at the grade 12 level; even more strikingly, the incidence of papers free of any errors in pronoun use plummets from 67.4% in grade 5 to 23.9% at grade 8, and barely recovers to 29% at grade 12.

Beyond these observations, one further point needs to be made. To a remarkable extent, once the effects of the different modes have been taken into account, Table 2 shows almost no evidence for a developmental progression. (Spelling errors are the only other exception to this generalization). What this means is that, assuming that the nature of the task may become more difficult as students get older, and that they will bring more developed cognitive resources to bear on those tasks as they get older, at the grade 12 level they will succeed in avoiding particular mechanical errors only about as often as they did so at the grade 5 level, despite the six or seven years of teaching to mechanical problems which may have intervened. To put it another way, in most respects grade 5 students are already handling basic mechanical skills about as well as they ever will. Only in their spelling can some slight improvement be expected.

Together, these results provide very gratifying confirmation of a point made in the earlier analysis of the narrative and argumentative writing of the grade 7 and 8 students. The striking and highly significant increase in the mechanical errors produced by the same students as they turned from the narrative to the argumentative assignment shows that mechanical skills are not acquired once and for all; rather mechanical problems may occur as a symptom of some other, and more fundamental, problem in the writing--greater rhetorical or intellectual or even moral difficulty, for example. Moreover

that fact points up the futility of teaching to mechanical skills as such: at best, that approach is attacking symptoms. Instead, the relevant strategy must be to attack the problem which causes those symptoms. We postulated in our report on the grade 7 and 8 study that the mechanical errors would look after themselves once the real writing problem was solved. The absence of any clear developmental trend in this study confirms that that is the case.

Table 3, on the following page presents the reanalysis of the same data to allow for direct comparison of the results on the basis of the various constants listed as standards. For example, the mean frequency of run-on sentences at the grade 5 level was 13.2 instances in 100 sentences. By grade 8 the mean had dropped to 3.6 instances in 100 sentences, and by grade 12 to 0.96.

In this form, the data show most clearly how slight the incidence of mechanical errors really is. The single category which might give cause for question is the agglomerated category "All other punctuation errors," for which (at all levels) an incidence of a little less than one error in every five sentences. Otherwise, there is no justification in the analysis for any concern with the calibre of mechanical skills at any of the three grade levels.

The Table shows even more clearly than Table 2 the effect of the mode of writing assigned. In 11 of the 22 categories tabulated, the highest incidence of mechanical error is at the

ERROR:	RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF ERROR (%) GRADE 5	GRADE 8	GRADE 12	STANDARD:
A. PUNCTUATION				
RUN-ON SENTENCES	13.2	3.6	0.96	SENTENCE
COMMA SPLICE	4.8	3.1	2.75	SENTENCE
FRAGMENT	3.9	4.8	2.3	SENTENCE
OMITTED QUESTION MARK	0.8	1.1	0.98	SENTENCE
OMITTED APOSTROPHE FOR POSSESSION	0.15	0.1	0.12	WORD
OMITTED APOSTROPHE FOR CONTRACTION	0.88	0.12	0.39	WORD
CONFUSION OF ITS AND IT'S	0.28	0.94	0.27	WORD
OMITTED QUOTATION MARKS	2.95	0.54	0.12	T-UNIT
ALL OTHER PUNCTUATION ERRORS	18.99	25.84	17.08	SENTENCE
B. SPELLING ERRORS				
CONFUSION OF HOMOPHONES	0.35	0.29	0.13	WORD
PHONETIC ERRORS	0.26	0.93	0.22	WORD
WORD DIVISION ERRORS	0.26	0.21	0.11	WORD
ALL OTHER SPELLING ERRORS	1.05	0.73	0.375	WORD
ALL SPELLING ERRORS	2.92	2.47	1.48	WORD
C. PRONOUN ERRORS				
PRONOUN CASE ERRORS	0.27	0.6	0.45	T-UNIT
INDEFINITE SINGULAR THEY	0.11	1.3	1.02	T-UNIT
ALL ERRORS IN USE OF PRONOUNS	2.23	14.76	8.12	T-UNIT
D. OTHER ERRORS				
VAGUE REFERENCE	1.19	8.07	3.8	T-UNIT
UNCLEAR REFERENCE	0.63	2.84	2.13	T-UNIT
SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT	0.47	0.69	1.04	CLAUSE
SUBSTANDARD VERB FORMS	0.32	0.26	0.1	CLAUSE
MODIFICATION ERRORS	0.16	0.7	0.5	T-UNIT

Table 3: Mean Relative Frequency of Mechanical Errors

grade 8 level; in many of these, the incidence of error at the grade 12 level has still not recovered to the level which the grade 5 students achieved in the narrative mode. This is the case with the relative incidence of sentence fragments, the omission of question marks, the confusion of its and it's, other punctuation errors, phonetic spelling errors, pronoun case errors, the use of they with indefinite singular antecedents, all errors in pronoun use, vague and unclear reference, and modification errors. In addition, one further error which appears to decrease developmentally also probably reflects a difference conditioned by the change of mode: the incidence of run-on sentences, which are intrinsically more likely to occur in narrative writing (especially at moments of climax and in the representation of dialogue), drops strikingly between grade 5 and grade 8.

Secondly, the Table shows how slight the incidence is of those errors which become slightly less frequent as the students get older: the comma splice, the omission of quotation marks, spelling errors other than phonetic errors, and the use of substandard verb forms. The mean relative frequency of the latter, for example, is only one instance in 1,000 clauses at the grade 12 level, but even at the grade 5 level the mean relative frequency is only 3.2 in 1,000 clauses. Such figures confirm the earlier comment: in most respects, at the grade 5 level students in the Carleton Board of Education are already handling mechanical skills almost as well as they ever will. It is scarcely necessary to say that that means that they are

already handling them extremely well.

Finally, the preceding comments in their turn reinforce the earlier assertion that devoting a lot of class time to teaching mechanics cannot be justified. Of all the figures in Table 3, it is those for the relative mean frequency of errors of subject-verb agreement that point this fact out most clearly and most painfully. The error is, of course, a familiar one, one which all teachers would recognize and which is treated in all major handbooks and grammars. At the grade 5 level, the mean relative frequency was approximately five such errors in 1,000 clauses. The students in grade 8, after three more years of grammar, increased the mean relative frequency to about seven errors in 1,000 clauses. Benefitting from four more years of grammar teaching, the grade 12 students increased their mean relative frequency yet again, to achieve the highest mean relative frequency for this class of error, with a frequency of over 10 instances in 1,000 clauses. Given that the error in question is so unmistakable, so clearly defined, so certain to capture a teacher's attention, so frequently mentioned in the Core Curriculum, these figures are a particularly clear demonstration of how hard it would be to justify increased attention to mechanical skills.

Syntactic Complexity

The syntactic complexity of the writing in the sample was analyzed by computing scores for a number of measures relating

to the minimal terminable unit, or "T-Unit." Basically, the T-Unit consists of an independent clause and all the dependent or conjoined structures attached to it which would be grammatically incomplete if detached. For example, "He left when he could" constitutes one T-Unit because "when he could" is grammatically dependent; "He sang and danced" is one T-Unit because "and danced" is grammatically incomplete by itself; however "John sang and Mary danced" constitutes two T-Units. Typically, a count of T-Units proves them to be intermediate units between clauses and sentences.

It is highly likely that, in good writing at any level, a T-Unit represents a single conceptual unit. The validity of T-Unit analysis thus depends on the fact that, as writing skills mature, writers become increasingly skilfull at subordinating and generally use more complex structures of modification. This fact is well established in the relevant research (Hunt 1965, O'Donnell et al. 1967; Loban 1976), and helps to explain the frequent use of T-Unit analysis in measurements of the effects of sentence combining instruction (Mellon 1967; O'Hare 1976; Kerek, Daiker and Morenberg 1977; Daiker, Kerek and Morenberg 1979). For school-age children, the status study which shows typical levels of competence for all grade levels and for three ability levels within each grade is Loban 1976. This work, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, reports on the results of a massive 13-year longitudinal study conducted at the University of California, Berkeley, and

funded by the U.S. Office of Education. Some very recent research investigating the nature of modal differences in student writing (Crowhurst and Piché 1979, Rubin and Piché 1980, Crowhurst 1979) has begun to examine more closely the effect of different modes of writing on T-Unit scores, an effect which was strikingly apparent in the analysis of the papers in the Grade 7 and 8 study completed last year. With this exception, however, all the other research investigating syntactic complexity in school-age children has turned up scores close to the random to high range reported by Loban for the particular grade (cf. Crowhurst, forthcoming).

In computing T-Unit scores, we looked at seven sets of scores, in order to allow for the fullest possible comparison to other studies. Only one score is common to all such studies: the computation of the number of words per T-Unit. Five others are used in at least one other published study: the computation of T-Units per sentence (Hunt 1965), of clauses per T-Unit (Hunt 1965, O'Donnell et al.), of dependent clauses per T-Unit (Loban 1976), of words per clause (O'Donnell et al; Hunt 1965, Hunt 1970), and of the percentage of words in finite dependent clauses (Loban 1976). The seventh measure, the computation of words in all (finite and non-finite) dependent structures is one we have added because, in our research into the development of writing abilities at the post-secondary level, we have found it to be more sensitive to differences which depend on subject. For this reason we calculated this score in the Grade 7 and 8 study.

Tables 4 and 5 and 6 report the results of the analysis for Grades 5, 8 and 12 respectively. In each case, the tabulation reports available scores for other studies at the same level. A preliminary glance comparing the means reported for this project (labelled CBE 5-8-12) shows at once how remarkable the performance of the students in the Carleton sample is according to these measures. In almost all cases, the scores achieved by the Carleton students exceed every other score reported at every level.

This achievement is remarkable enough in itself. But its full significance can be appreciated only by comparing the nature of the sample in the various studies. To our knowledge, the Carleton Board study is the largest study of this kind ever undertaken. In itself, it is a direct analysis of the writing of the 710 students in the primary sample. They in their turn, however, represent the 7,720 students from whom the sample was drawn, and since the sampling ratio was in fact large (10%) and the response rate very good (cf. p. 4 above), the validity of the extrapolation to the whole population of grade 5, 8 and 12 levels is very high.

By contrast, Hunt's 1965 study reported on the performance of 9 boys and 9 girls at each of grades 4, 8 and 12. They were eligible for selection because they received scores of 90-110 on the California Test of Mental Maturity, but they were not selected randomly. His 1970 study reported on the performance of 17 "high" ability, 16 "middle" ability and 17 "low" ability students

	O'DONNELL ET AL.	LOBAN 1976			CBE
		LOW	RANDOM	HIGH	5-8-12
WORDS PER T-UNIT	7.67	6.29	8.76	9.5	9.2
T-UNITS PER SENTENCE					1.28
CLAUSES PER T-UNIT	1.27				1.16
DEPENDENT CLAUSES PER T-UNIT		0.14	0.21	0.35	0.38
WORDS PER CLAUSE	6.5				8.21
PERCENTAGE OF WORDS IN FINITE DEPENDENT CLAUSES		17.5	19.6	24	23.2
PERCENTAGE OF WORDS IN ALL DEPENDENT CLAUSES					27.1

Table 4: Mean Syntactic Complexity Scores at the Grade 5 Level and Comparative Data

	HUNT	HUNT '70			LOBAN '76			CBE		
	'65	LOW	MID	HIGH	LOW	RANDOM	HIGH	5-8-12	7-8 NAR	7-8 ARG
WORDS PER T-UNIT	8.6	7.55	10.3	11.7	9.49	10.4	11.2	14.7	11.1	15.9
T-UNITS PER SENTENCE	1.37							1.22		
CLAUSES PER T-UNIT	1.42							1.44		
DEPENDENT CLAUSES PER T-UNIT					0.4	0.5	0.54	0.95	0.47	1.04
WORDS PER CLAUSE	8.1	6.1	7	7.3				10.5		
PERCENTAGE OF WORDS IN FINITE DEPENDENT CLAUSES					18.5	23.3	26.9	42.3		
PERCENTAGE OF WORDS IN ALL DEPENDENT CLAUSES								47.2	38.3	51.4

Table 5: Mean Syntactic Complexity Scores at the Grade 8 Level and Comparative Data

	HUNT '65	HUNT '70			LOP'N			CROWHURST '79		CBE	SKIL
		LOW	MID	HIGH	LOW	RANDOM	HIGH	NAR	ARG	5-8-12	ADUL
WORDS PER T-UNIT	14.4	10.2	11.5	12.3	11.2	13.3	14.1	12.5	16.0	16.8	14.
T-UNITS PER SENTENCE	1.17									1.15	1.
CLAUSES PER T-UNIT	1.68									1.34	1.
DEPENDENT CLAUSES PER T-UNIT					0.52	0.6	0.66			0.92	
WORDS PER CLAUSE	3.6	7.4	7.7	8.4						12.6	9.
PERCENTAGE OF WORDS IN FINITE DEPENDENT CLAUSES					28.8	34.6	36.3			41	
PERCENTAGE OF WORDS IN ALL DEPENDENT CLAUSES										48.1	

Table 6: Mean Syntactic Complexity Scores at the Grade 12 Levels Comparative Data

at each of grades 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12. The ranking of the students into these three groups was undertaken on the basis of a number of relevant test scores, so that on this basis the 250 students in the study represented the 1,000 students from whom they were drawn. However the original group of 1,000 was again not a random sample. Crowhurst's 1979 study reports scores for 20 boys and 20 girls randomly selected from 223 students in eight 6th-grade classes, 228 students in eleven 10th-grade classes and 206 students in ten 12th-grade classes in Brandon, Manitoba. Although the selected students in this study represent the population from which they were drawn with a high degree of validity (the sampling ratio is over 20%), that original population is still not representative of all the students in the grades in question. Loban's 1976 study reports the scores for three groups of 35 students, only one of them a random sample, from the 211 students remaining of an original total of 338 subjects who were considered on the basis of demographic data to be a representative cross-section of children entering the public school system of Oakland, California in 1953.

Given the size of the sample of students in the Carleton Board study and the high validity of the extrapolation to the whole population of students at the grade 5, 8 and 12 levels, the results summarized in the three tables justify the statement that students in the Carleton Board of Education are able to draw on levels of syntactic complexity far above those that

have been established as norms for students at those levels. With the exception of three scores (words per T-Unit, clauses per T-Unit, and the percentage of words in finite dependent clauses), the mean scores for the Carleton grade 5 students are higher than all the other scores reported at that level. Their scores are exceeded in two of the three instances only by the scores of the 35 "High" students in Loban's study, the top 35 students in his sample of 211, and for the other score by O'Donnell's students, who come from an exceptionally priveleged socio-economic background. Of all the scores reported at the grade 8 level, only one exceeds the mean achieved by the Carleton students: the score for T-Units per sentence achieved by the students in Hunt's 1965 study. At the grade 12 level the students in the Carleton Board population achieved scores which again exceed all but two of all the others reported: Hunt's 1965 scores for T-Units per sentence and clauses per T-Unit. On the other hand, the Carleton students' scores for words per T-Unit and words per clause actually exceed those reported (in Hunt 1970) for professional adult writers.

In itself, syntactic complexity does not guarantee good writing--as a matter of fact, it can be associated with rather bad writing, as can be seen in the report on the grade 7 and 8 study. More particularly, it can tell us nothing of students' rhetorical abilities, nor of their organisational abilities beyond the sentence level. However it does measure the linguistic resources they can draw on to express complex ideas, and there

is no doubt as to its validity as a measure of the maturation of those resources. At each of the levels studied, the performance of the Carleton Board students in this respect was outstanding.

Chapter II. Rhetorical and Cognitive Analysis.

In addition to the mechanical and syntactic analysis, we investigated the writing rhetorically and cognitively. We were particularly interested in development in the argumentative mode and the degree of success, at both levels, in that mode. For this part of the project, then, we excluded the narratives (grade 5) from our discussion and analysed a 10% subsample of the grade 8 and grade 12 essays (N = 48).

The analysis of the data was performed by two trained independent raters, who judged each piece of writing according to a set of rhetorical criteria; described the organization of each with reference to a list of mutually exclusive categories developed for this project; classified the arguments according to content; and counted the number of major and minor points, the number of examples and illustrations, and the average number of words in each per paper. The two sets of scores were correlated using a Pearson-moment correlation; where the coefficient falls below .80, that will be reported with the data. Our figures are based on the average of the two raters' scores.

The salient features that emerged from our analysis can be grouped under the following headings: the overall rhetorical quality; amplitude of the writing; the ability to handle abstract concepts; the nature of the arguments; the rhetorical control of argumentative structure; the nature of the revisions.

Overall Rhetorical Quality

In order to determine the overall quality of the writing, each piece was rated by two independent markers according to a set of rhetorical criteria. These criteria are essentially adaptations of those found in most conventional rhetorical measures of student writing and are consistent, in the main, with the qualities of successful argumentative prose described in most of the traditional texts on rhetoric. They include: coherence, economy, vividness, vocabulary range, overall stylistic effectiveness, and register (the degree of formality of the language).[1]

The raters evaluated each paper holistically according to each criterion; that is, after reading the essay rapidly, they scored it on a scale of 1 - 5 according to each of the criteria. The raters were unaware of the grade or level of the essays they examined.

Table 7 shows the average performance of the grade 8's as compared to the grade 12's according to all the rhetorical criteria evaluated holistically.

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[1] The criteria "unity" and "organization" found in most rhetorical instruments we attempted to get at in another way. We developed certain classifications of possible organizational patterns on the basis of the data, and each essay was slotted by the raters accordingly. See the section entitled "The Rhetorical Control of Argumentative Structure."

Table 7: Rhetorical Criteria (Means)			
	Grade 8	Grade 12	Correlation Coefficient
coherence	2.54	3.45	.61
economy	2.19	3.09	.62
vividness	1.93	3.19	.67
vocabulary range	2.07	3.74	.72
overall style	1.91	3.21	.78
register	1.96	3.26	.76

On all the criteria except economy and coherence, where the difference was just under a point, the grade 12's were judged to be well over one point higher than the grade 8's. Their vocabulary range seemed wider, the level of their language more appropriate to argumentation, their overall style more vivid and effective, and their writing more coherent and economical.

The Amplitude of the Writing

We have already seen that the grade 12 students wrote more, in terms of number of words, sentences, and T-Units. In order to determine the nature of this difference in quantity, we counted the number of examples or illustrations used per paper, the average number of words for each, the number of separate points raised by each writer, the average length of each, and the number of subpoints raised as part of a larger argument in each essay.

There was no significant difference between the grade 8's and the grade 12's in the number of examples used per paper (an average of just over two for each) nor in the average number of words for each example (30.7 for grade 12 as compared to 29.8 for grade 8). The difference between the two grades lay, instead, in the number of separate points or arguments raised by each writer: an average of 5.0 for the grade 12's as compared to 2.89 for the grade 8's. In other words, the grade 12's were able to generate more ideas on the subject, and to see the topic from more perspectives. Their papers were richer, not in concrete illustrating detail, but in the number of abstract arguments and generalizations they could muster with reference to violence on television. Such a measure cannot indicate how well the separate ideas are integrated (this will be discussed in a subsequent section) but it can reflect on the relative ideational fertility of the two groups.

The grade 12's also presented more subpoints as part of main argument than the grade 8's, an average of 1.57 compared to 1.41. Clearly, however, neither group of writers tended to build very elaborate logical structures in making their arguments.

The Ability to Handle Abstract Topics

The essay topic for both the grade 8's and grade 12's required them to deal with the concept of "television violence," and there was an interesting developmental difference between

the students at the two levels in their handling of this abstract concept. Specifically, whereas all the grade 12 students seemed to be using the concept in the same way as an adult would, for many of the grade 8 students, "violence" was functioning as a "complex" or "pseudo-concept," to use Vygotsky's terms. Vygotsky distinguishes a "complex" from a true concept as follows: "In a complex, the bonds between its components are concrete and factual rather than abstract and logical . . . A complex . . . is first and foremost a concrete grouping of objects connected by factual bonds. Since a complex is not formed on the plane of abstract logical thinking, the bonds that create it, as well as the bonds it helps to create, lack logical unity; they may be of many different kinds. Any factually present connection may lead to the inclusion of a given element into a complex. This is the main difference between a complex and a concept. While a concept groups objects according to one attribute, the bonds relating the elements of a complex to the whole and to one another may be as diverse as the contacts and relationships of the elements are in reality." (L.S. Vygotsky, Thought and Language, trans. E. Hanfmann and G. Vakar, M.I.T. Press, 1962).

Thus many of the grade 8 students included in their use of the term "violence," "picking up girls," "seducing women," "drugs," "bad language," and, in one memorable instance, "chewing with your mouth open." Everything that is condemned by the adult world seems to be covered by the term. In other words, having heard the word "violent" ascribed to situations which

include "violence" but also drug use, or profane language or sex, the students are using the term to include the whole episode and not just those aspects that are conceptually "violent."

By grade 12, however, judging by the instances used to illustrate the term, the students understand "violence" as an abstract concept.

The Nature of the Arguments

A significant feature that differentiated the grade 12 from the grade 8 writing was the nature of the arguments raised either in favour of or against T.V. violence. As we have already seen, the grade 12 students on average were able to make more points in arguing their position whatever that position was; consequently, this analysis of the kinds of arguments raised will be presented in terms of percentage of the total number of arguments made by the cohort group (grade 8 or grade 12) unless otherwise indicated.

For the grade 8 students, the dominant argument that was raised had to do with the physical consequences of viewing violence on T.V. Almost 50% of the points made had to do with the injuries children would either inflict on themselves or on others as a result of their viewing--with a fairly even split between the two. In contrast, only 15% of the grade 12 arguments fell into either of these two categories; and of the two, the concern about children hurting others by far

predominated. Only 3% saw the danger of children imitating impossible feats on T.V. and hurting themselves. Obviously, the possibility of confusing T.V. with reality is much more real for the grade 8 students (despite the heated response of one pupil that such an argument is insulting.)

The predominance of arguments relating to actual physical consequences among the grade 8 students reveals the relative lack of sophistication in their thinking, especially when compared with the kinds of arguments arrayed by the grade 12 students. Thus 28% of grade 12 students argued that seeing violence regularly on T.V. makes us apathetic to violence in the real world; this point was never raised by any of the grade 8 students. Arguing in favour of such programming, 40% of the grade 12 students (as opposed to 9% of the grade 8 students) asserted that violence on T.V. only imitates reality, 28% (as opposed to 13%) asserted that T.V. violence is so unreal and fantastic that it is not likely to encourage imitation, 28% (as opposed to 5%) pointed to the fact that violence is portrayed by the other media as well, 20% (as opposed to 9%) were concerned about the censorship issue, 20% (as opposed to 0%) argued that seeing violence on T.V. may release one's aggressive impulses by catharsis, and 20% (as opposed to 5%) felt that the portrayal of violence is necessary for artistic purpose, that conflict, for example, is essential to drama.

Cumulatively, what these differences point to is an expansion in the horizons of the grade 12 students: they are

more widely experienced in the intellectual world; they have read more, seen more, and are able to make more wide-ranging connections. Their world-view has broadened and they are thus able to move outside their own limited range of experience. Along with this ability to see beyond themselves, however, has come the ability to see themselves in greater depth. When they do discuss self, or at least universal human psychology, they do so with far greater awareness of the complexity of their own natures.

Rhetorical Control of Argumentative Structure

Perhaps the most striking finding in our rhetorical analysis was how few of the papers at both levels (8 and 12) were organized according to the classical pattern for an argumentative essay. The argumentative pattern in writing is typically presented as some variant of the following: an introduction moving toward a statement of the author's position; a series of points illustrating or arguing that position; an optional refutation of any obvious counter arguments; and a conclusion which restates the author's position. Competent writers of course elaborate on this pattern and there are subtleties and nuances not accounted for in this bare statement, but we were interested in seeing to what degree just this skeletal structure was embodied in the writing of the students. Our finding was that most of the writing simply did not incorporate even these basic elements of argumentative structure.

Instead, most of the writing fell into one of two related categories. The first kind of pattern resembled a stream of consciousness patterning. The writer began writing about the topic, allowing one idea to lead to another according to his own stream of association. Although the essay as a whole stayed generally on topic, no logical sequential pattern could be discerned.

In the second type, the writer developed a series of points about the topic, either in few words or many, but the separate points were themselves in no way related. At the end of each distinct point, the writer seemed to go back to the topic to start anew. The essay as a whole was unified only by the fact that all the points related more or less to the topic.

Sometimes, as was more typical with the grade 8's, there was an almost random listing of relevant points. (See, for example, Appendix I). A more sophisticated version of this pattern was common among the grade 12's; there, the individual points were grouped according to three categories: arguments against violence on T.V.; arguments in favour; and my own views. Again, what was remarkable about this group of essays was that there was no attempt to integrate the ideas in these three separate categories, so that "my opinion" did not involve a weighing and balancing of the others, but simply a different set of arguments entirely. There was no single governing idea unifying the piece to which all the separate points were related.

The fact that so few of the papers were formally structured or organized according to the structure of argumentation suggests two possible conclusions: either these students are unable to impose structure on written material at all, or else they are incapable of doing so specifically in argumentation. Our previous study investigating the writing of grade 7 and 8 students suggested that the latter was the case.

In the grade 7 and 8 study, we analysed the work of some 500 students who were each asked to write both argumentative and narrative pieces. There we found that students were very well able to write stories which conformed to conventional narrative structure; in fact, they were so much masters of this genre that they were able to play with the form, to use anti-climaxes as well as climaxes, to reverse the reader's expectations. It was only when they turned to argumentation that their writing seemed lacking in structure and organization.

The Nature of the Revisions

A separate phenomenon relating to this failure on the part of so many students to realize the argumentative pattern was this: an astonishingly small proportion of the final drafts of the essays were different, except in superficial ways, from the first draft the students had written.

As noted in the introduction, the original project had been designed in such a way as to allow for, in fact to encourage revision on the part of the students. The students were assigned

the topic one day, given one period to write a draft and were told that that draft would be returned to them for revising on some subsequent occasion. Then after the lapse of at least one day to allow for enough distance from the piece, the students were given another period to write their final drafts. Despite this, only 22.8% of the students as a whole (10% of the grade 5's, 18.5% of the grade 8's, and 38.7% of the grade 12's) altered their original draft in any significant way. The second versions perhaps were neater and the mechanics were attended to more closely, otherwise they were identical.

It is of course encouraging to note that the grade 12's revised more than the grade 8's, who revised more than the grade 5's; nevertheless, the fact remains that 61% of the grade 12 students could not--or at least did not--revise their draft, and these drafts needed revision in a fundamental sense.

What the students all seemed to have produced as their final essay was a first draft, a discovery draft, in which they explored and discovered their ideas about the subject. Clearly the writing was a learning experience for the writers--as it should be. In the course of writing, they were forced to articulate their half-formed thoughts and assumptions about the subject, some of which were contradictory, others of which were qualified or modified as they wrote. The students discovered during the process of writing how articulation in language, and especially written language, can force one to clarify and come to terms with one's ideas. What they did not seem to know is that this is only the first step in writing argumentation.

The next step should have been to review the material and re-organize their thoughts. Having in most cases come to an interesting, reasoned conclusion by the end of their writing, they needed now to use that as their introduction and to re-organize and rethink the rest of their material in the light of this main point. That they did not so do suggests that these students lack either an awareness of the nature of argumentative structure or the ability to re-organize and revise their exploratory drafts according to such a structure or a conception of the writing process which includes revising as integral and creative.

Conclusion

The grade 12 argumentative writing differed markedly from the grade 8 writing in many respects. The grade 12 writers seemed to be able to generate more ideas on the topic; on average, their papers included more separate points and more sub-points, giving their essays an impression of greater density and texture.

Furthermore, the nature of their arguments differed significantly as well; the grade 12's brought to bear far more world knowledge and argued the issues in greater depth and with an awareness of their complexity. At the same time, they handled the abstract concepts involved in the topic with ease, while for many of the grade 8's, the term "violence" seemed to operate as a "complex" rather than an abstract concept.

Most of the writing in both grades, however, was marred by the same failure to structure their ideas according to the classical argumentative pattern. Instead, what appeared as final copy seemed to be the initial exploratory draft. At the same time, very few of the students used the opportunity provided by the assignment to revise in any significant way, suggesting that for them writing is typically a one-draft affair.

Given the remarkable success of the students according to other measures, it is to these failures--the inability to produce appropriately structured argumentative prose and the inability or disinclination to go through several revising cycles--that teachers and program planners must address themselves.

Chapter III. Teaching Implications

1. Our results suggest that teaching the "basics," that is the conventions of punctuation and correct usage, as a whole class activity is certainly unnecessary at the grade 8 and 12 levels, and may already be somewhat redundant by the grade 5 levels.

2. Some students clearly do need direct teaching of such conventions; this is best done on an individual basis, preferably in the context of their own writing.

3. Those errors that do seem to recur for some students (fragments, run-ons, apostrophe errors, etc.) should be taught without the paraphernalia of any grammatical system--inductively, by using appropriate operational techniques.

4. Children need to be given the opportunity to write in all three modes--poetic, expressive, and transactional--from a very early age. Although stories and expressive writing will probably dominate in the primary years, children should be allowed the option of writing in the transactional mode as well (writing reports on their reading, for example, or opinion pieces) if they so desire. By the junior years, transactional writing (both report and opinion writing) can be encouraged--for example by topics suggested by the teacher and by discussion of appropriate models from the newspaper and children's magazines.

5. At all stages, children should be encouraged to write as much as possible (and always more than the teacher had imagined possible) in a wide range of modes in all subjects. Children even at the primary years can produce, and can enjoy producing,

many pages of written script per day--in journals, learning logs, notes, stories, reports.

6. All students must come to see writing as a process in which revising is essential and creative; they must learn to distinguish between revising and editing.

(a) Students must be deprogrammed so that they stop considering neatness as the ultimate goal; they must learn that they must "make it messy to make it clear."

(b) From the early years, pupils should be shown techniques for revising (cutting and pasting, using arrows); they should be encouraged to write on every second line, to allow for substitution and elaboration; and they must be taught that each piece of writing may go through many successive drafts.

(c) Successive drafts of the same piece should be routinely demanded and responded to by the teacher, with an insistence on neatness and perfect mechanical form only on the last draft, if then.

7. Students should be encouraged to write to a wide range of audiences--parents, principals, janitors, younger school children, schoolchildren in other schools, fellow classmates, and to their teacher in many roles (not just teacher as examiner). Tasks which specify imaginary audiences are not particularly helpful.

8. Ideally, pupils should be allowed to see the response of their readers. Other pupils especially should be encouraged to respond to their fellows' writing--as readers, however, not

as critics. Such interaction must be orchestrated very carefully and thoughtfully by the teacher at the beginning; if the stage is not properly set, pupils will simply "play teacher" with their peers' writing, red circling mercilessly.

9. The teaching of writing is best done in a workshop, not a lecture-hall. The structure of the classroom and the orientation of the teacher must be altered accordingly.

10. Most of these suggestions emerge from a philosophy of writing and language that is radically different from the sets of assumptions that governed composition and language teaching when most teachers were educated. To be effective these new methods must be applied with a full understanding of the philosophy behind them. Clearly a massive re-orientation and re-education is necessary on the part of most teachers, a re-orientation that can only be accomplished by a great deal of reading, thinking, and discussing. In the last ten to fifteen years, there have been exciting new developments in composition research and pedagogy; our teachers must become aware of these new developments--not least so that they may share the renewed vitality of the discipline and bring that enthusiasm to their classrooms.

Appendix I SAMPLE GRADE 8 TEXT

Violence on Television is a Topic of Some Concern Today Do you consider the effects of this violence? Harmful or not? Give evidence for your arguments.

Violence is a crime that happens all over the world. You hear about people murdering other people, or a hit and run incident etcc. Violence on television is just as bad as it is when you hear it on the radio. Some people get so scared they don't want to go outside in the dark because they think they might get mugged etc. Also it doesn't leave a very good impression. Even if there is a movie and all of it is made up it can still scare children or it can make baby-sitters frightened.

I think that the effects are harmful to many people. I think it is stupid to go around and kill someone or wreck something. It doesn't prove anything and if you get caught you could be put in prison for a long time. Also it is against the law to go around murdering people and wrecking other people's things. I think that it is totally dumb and I wish they would stop putting it on the television.

Violence on TV: Good or Bad?

Does violence on television create a good or bad impression? One could easily defend either side successfully for there are good arguments both defending violence on T.V. and indicating that violence should be omitted.

In the position of defending the subject there are three basic points to be made. Many say that watching violence on television is a way for people to release agression. As the stress of daily life builds up, there are few ways of releasing the tension created. Seeing the violence helps releave this tension in this way: the person gets a feeling of satisfaction as he sees the "bad guys" getting killed or he simply "thinks" his agression away. What is meant by this is the person carries out in his mind the violence he has seen which he himself would like to do. This also produces a feeling of satisfaction.

In the case of certain movies or T.V. shows, it is actually necessary to show violence. For instance, what would a war movie be without war? And is war not violent?

The last basic point to be made is that showing violence on television is really the realistic thing to do. Violence is a part of everyday life and we must learn to come to terms and live with it.

Arguing that violence should not be shown on television, this fact could be presented. studies have shown that violence on T.V. can trigger violence inside a person. That is, a person who has thoughts about committing some act of violence, upon seeing violence may commit this act. seeing the violence on television was the thing that helped the person to finally decide to carry out his plans.

Of course, violence on T.V. has a great effect upon children. When they see violence on television day after day, they tend to believe that there is nothing wrong with it. Children also don't understand the consequences of violence. Because they are so easily influenced by their surroundings and what they see, violence seen on T.V. can have a terrible effect on them.

Personally, I am against violence on television. I feel that it is unecessary to be shown publically in this manner. Besides being a bad influence on children, violence is also a bad influence on adults. As we see it daily in one fashion or another, we get used to it and eventually become insensitive to it. Even if society must learn to

live with violence, it does not mean we should not feel anything for it and what it does.

As a solution, if people really enjoy to see or feel a need to see violence, let them go to a movie theatre. Parents of small children should also be more strict with what they allow their children to watch on television or at the movies.

I feel that the disadvantages of violence being present on television outweigh the advantages and that violence should be omitted from T.V.

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